



Published: 07.14.2008

## Sales-tax backers want rewrite

### Pamphlet's text about initiative misleads: lawsuit

By Andrea Kelly

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The backers of an initiative to increase the state sales tax from 5.6 to 6.6 cents on a dollar to pay for transportation say a pamphlet describing the proposal, being sent by the state to all voters, is misleading.

The group is suing the committee of state lawmakers and others who approved the pamphlet language to force them to change it before the document is sent out to every registered voter in the state.

The pamphlet, which won't arrive in the mailbox for months, includes a description of each initiative appearing on the November ballot to go with pro and con arguments written by the public.

The TIME Coalition gathered signatures for the initiative to raise the state sales tax a penny, from 5.6 cents to 6.6 cents on a dollar, for 30 years to pay for transportation improvements.

When the Legislative Council, which includes members of the state House, Senate and the secretary of state, voted on the pamphlet wording last week, it approved a paragraph that points out the 1 cent increase amounts to a 17 percent hike.

That wording is "misleading and mischaracterizing," said Katie Hutchinson, a spokeswoman for the campaign.

"The analysis is misleading because it describes the tax provisions that increase the tax rate by one percentage point as 'a 17.8 percent tax increase,' " the coalition wrote in its lawsuit against the council.

"This expression of a percentage increase of the tax percentage would be confusing to voters, some of whom may think it means that for every dollar spent on goods, they will have to pay an additional 17.8 cents in sales tax, rather than an additional 1 cent in sales tax," the suit claims.

Another problem with the description is that it doesn't say what the initiative would do until after the sales tax increase is explained, Hutchinson said.

In the suit, the initiative backers ask a Maricopa County Superior Court judge to declare the language to be partisan, and a violation of state law.

The backers want the judge to order an impartial description of the initiative for the pamphlet.

A judge could order the council to accept the coalition's suggested new wording or could tell the council to start over in writing a description.

The pamphlet is scheduled to be printed in mid-August. Members of the Legislative Council could not be reached late Friday, after the suit was filed.

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